



1st announcement

Call for papers

9th European Conference on Higher Agricultural Education (ECHAE)

<http://www.9echae.udl.cat/>

**Jointly organized by
the Association for European Life Science Universities (ICA) and the
Agriculture and Forestry Engineering School of the University of Lleida**

**Developing roadmaps for European Life Science degrees:
Competences, Quality, Employability**

Lleida, 2nd - 5th September 2008

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Developing roadmaps for European Life Science degrees: Competences, Quality, Employability

Current socioeconomic and demographic factors in the agricultural industry (and the consequent decline in student enrolment for agricultural degree programmes) have forced universities to refocus and extend their traditional curricula to encompass the holistic development of the rural environment, the need for bio-renewable resources and the full extent of the food chain including human nutritional standards.

Furthermore, in these times of global change, student exchanges and universities competing for students, governments and universities are now placing more emphasis on the employability of their graduates and their preparation for specific professional areas.

Agriculture and Life Science graduates are employed in a wide range of posts which may, or may not, be related to the discipline they studied. Universities offering higher level qualifications in Agriculture and Life Sciences must therefore ask the following questions:

- Do you know what your former students are now doing and where they are working?
- Are your present students aware of the graduate employment opportunities open to them?
- How soon do undergraduates decide what they want to do after graduating?
- Are potential employers aware of the skills sets of graduates?
- Do students receive help when making employment applications?
- Do students receive help with exploiting what they learn at university and using it to make them more readily employable?
- Does the current curriculum promote employability?
- Are students exposed to professional work experience?
- Is the contribution of extra-curricula activities to employability fully recognised?

This conference will examine the employment possibilities and perspectives for our graduates and look at the skills sets needed. It will also analyse different university systems and experiences and examine how they assess the employability of their graduates and decide on the skills and competences that potential employers are interested in. It will also consider professional development to help teaching and research staff adapt to these changing needs.

With all these questions to answer, this conference will mainly focus on the following themes:

- The job market: for life science graduates in the EU
Improving the employability of graduates: case studies
- Competences, what graduates should know and be able to do, and how to develop them to enhance employability
- Quality issues: assessing learning outcomes
- Meeting new demands for staff development

The conference will include plenary keynote papers, presentations of technical papers, roundtable debates and workshops, in parallel sessions. There will also be a conference-theme excursion. The official language at the conference will be English and no simultaneous translation will be provided. All of the papers accepted will be included in the conference proceedings.

You are invited to submit an abstract on one of the conference themes.

Deadline for the submission of the abstracts: 1 March 2008

On behalf of the ICA and the Agriculture and Forestry Engineering School of the University of Lleida, we look forward to welcoming you to Lleida (Spain) in September 2008.

Conference secretariat

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